

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FMC-04

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 COA-02 DLOS-06 AID-20

SCI-06 FEA-02 INT-08 CEQ-02 EPA-04 PA-04 USIA-15

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9644

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, DR, US

SUBJECT: FIRST TECHNICAL-LEVEL MEETING ON SUPER-PORT

REF: SD -5045

1. ON JANUARY 17, HEAD
PUERTO RICAN TECHNICAL COMMISSION,
WILLIAM RIEFKOHL, PHONED FROM SAN JUAN TO BRIEF EMBASSY ON
RESULTS OF JOINT MEETING IN SANTO DOMINGO JANUARY 16 WITH DOMINICAN
COMMISSION HEADED BY CIVIL DEFENSE CHIEF MARINO ARIZA HERNANDEZ
REGARDING SUPER-PORT ISSUE. ACCORDING TO RIEFKOHL,
MORNING SESSION WAS DEVOTED TO PRESENTATION BY PUERTO RICANS
DESIGNED TO ALLAY FEARS AND REMOVE OBJECTIONS OF DOMINICANS TO
DEEP-WATER PORT AND REFINERY PROJECT. IN ADDITION TO ORAL PRE-
SENTATIONS, LARGE NUMBER OF STUDIES OF ECONOMIC, ENGINEERING, AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF PROJECT WERE LEFT WITH DOMINICANS.
FOLLOWING LUNCH, DOMINICANS TOOK INITIATIVE. THEY CONCEDED
THAT NORMAL OPERATION OF PROJECT WOULD PROBABLY NOT DAMAGE
DOMINICAN COASTS AND EVEN THAT SMALL ACCIDENTS COULD BE CON-
TROLLED AS PUERTO RICANS CLAIMED. WHAT WORRIED THEM WAS POSSI-
BILITY OF MAJOR CATASTROPHE INVOLVING SPILLAGE OF MILLIONS
OF GALLONS OF OIL. IF THIS TOOK PLACE THEY ASKED WHO WOULD CLEAN
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UP THE DOMINICAN COAST LINE? WHO WOULD PAY FOR IT?

HOW COULD AFFECTED DOMINICAN
INTERESTS SUCH AS TOURISM AND FISHING SURVIVE DURING THE CLEAN-UP
PERIOD?

2. RIEFKOHL SAID PUERTO RICANS TRIED TO REASSURE DOMINICAN
COMMISSION ON THESE POINTS, BUT OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT OFFER IRON-
CLAD GUARANTEES. ON ANOTHER TACK, RIEFKOHL SAID PUERTO RICANS
SOUGHT TO EMPHASIZE POSSIBLE BENEFITS PROJECT COULD BRING TO
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SUCH AS CONVENIENCE OF MONA ISLAND AS TRANS-
SHIPMENT POINT FOR FUTURE DOMINICAN OIL IMPORTS. HE ALSO STATED
THAT PROJECT IS OPEN TO PARTICIPATION BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES,
INCLUDING THE GODR. HE SAID HE INDICATED - BUT DID NOT PROMISE-
THAT "SPECIAL CONSIDERATION" MIGHT BE GIVEN TO A REQUEST BY THE
GODR TO JOIN IN THE PROJECT.

3. RIEFKOHL EVALUATED THE MEETING AS CONSTRUCTIVE, ALTHOUGH
HE SAID IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT ALL DOMINICAN RESER-
VATIONS TO DISAPPEAR. PUERTO RICAN OBJECTIVE, HE SAID, IS TO
REDUCE DOMINICAN ANXIETIES TO POINT WHERE PROJECT MAY MOVE
FORWARD WITHOUT ELICITING ANGUISHED OUTCRIES FROM DOMINICANS.
IF GODR AGREES TO PARTICIPATE IN PROJECT, RIEFKOHL THOUGHT
PUERTO RICAN OBJECTIVE WILL BE FAR EASIER TO ATTAIN. NEXT
JOINT MEETING OF COMMISSIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN PUERTO RICO
IN FEBRUARY WHEN PUERTO RICANS PLAN TO SPONSOR TOURS OF SUN
OIL REFINERY AND ENVIRONS AT YABUCOA AND POSSIBLY HESS
REFINERY AT ST. CROIX TO DEMONSTRATE CLEAN OPERATIONS OF
MODERN REFINERIES.

4. LOCAL MEDIA REACTION HAS GENERALLY BEEN CONSISTENT
WITH RIEFKOHL'S DESCRIPTION OF THE MEETING AS CONSTRUCTIVE.
ONLY EXCEPTION THUS FAR WAS JANUARY 17 EDITORIAL IN SENSA-
TIONAL AFTERNOON DAILY ULTIMA HORA, WHICH SAID UNNAMED SOURCE
WITHIN DOMINICAN COMMISSION HAD TERMED PUERTO RICANS "NOT
TECHNICIANS BUT PROPAGANDISTS IN FAVOR OF SUPER-PORT PROJECT".
ON OTHER HAND, COMMENTS OF DOMINICAN COMMISSION PRESS SPOKES-
MAN FRANK MARINO HERNANDEZ FOLLOWING MEETING-ALTHOUGH UNDER-
STANDABLY CAUTIOUS-WERE POSITIVE AND UNDERScored USEFULNESS
OF KEEPING UP CONTINUING DIALOGUE ON PROJECT.
HURWITCH

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Message Attributes

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